

Development for and of the People

Bank bail out or abolition?

By **JESSE CALL**
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Is self-worth tied to work? For advocates participating in a recent community forum at Xavier University, the common thread among their perspectives was how the government can better the livelihoods of those experiencing poverty and homelessness by diverting funds to activities that will create jobs. That way, people will find value in making a contribution to their community.

On April 5 Xavier University Students for Economic Justice, an organization promoting education and fair trade, hosted “Urbanomics Panel: Controversial Topics in Cincinnati Urban Development.”

The panel consisted of Dan La Botz, a Socialist candidate running to represent Ohio in the U.S. Senate; Rob Goeller, human-rights outreach coordinator for the Greater Cincinnati Coalition for the Homeless; and Vlasta Molak, executive director of the Gaia Foundation. The panelists answered a range of questions from a student moderator before the audience was allowed to ask questions.

The panelists agreed that local government is wasting re-

See **Development**, p. 4



Dan La Botz, Socialist Party Candidate for U.S. Senate, makes a point at an April 5 panel discussion. The other panelists are Rob Goeller and Vlasta Molak.
Photo by Jon Hughes/photopresse.

The Stories of the Man in the Van

Making art of recession’s woes

By **DWAYNE PRIDE**
STREET NEWS SERVICE

Denver VOICE – Art-prize is a national contest for fine artists and emerging artists from all around the world. It is said to be one of the largest prizes that an artist can hope to win to get recognized for his or her craft. All of the winners are chosen by the public. The top prize is \$250,000. For most, when they think of somebody who would be part of a contest like this, they would not think of a poor man, a homeless man, as one of its participants. Artist/driver Aaron Heideman aka “The Man in the Van” proves this theory wrong.

“I don’t want to panhandle,” he says.

After losing jobs during the recession his life was more than just a struggle. He hit rock bottom. But he took a creative angle on his situation and found some freedom from a 9-to-5 with a road trip that eventually took him through at least 30 states. His mission: to make an enormous tapestry of people’s experience of the recession. State by state, city by city, he

collected words.

His project started in Medford, which he calls home. Driving through places like Portland, Fresno, Las Vegas, Phoenix and Denver, he met all types of people and had them share their experiences of a sagging economy and what it has done to their lives.

People wrote their individual stories on rolls of 50-foot waterproof, tear-proof white Tyvek paper. All he asked was, “How has the recession affected you?”

‘There is no recession’

As people pass by Heideman hands them cards that say, “Help A Homeless Guy Make Art. History.” The card is how he starts every meeting with people before they write their stories on the van. “Tell Me Your Story” is written boldly on the side of the van to entice the public to participate in what he is offering them, a way to vent their feelings. People stop with a variety of comments.

“There is no recession,” one man says as he refuses to take a card. “That’s a myth. The only reason people think



Dwayne Pride literally took his show on the road. *Photo by Aaron Heideman.*

there is a recession is because they say there is one.”

Heideman says he is amazed by how many people blame Obama for all of the country’s problems. Despite his views, though, he has tried to keep his project open to everyone.

“I’m not a Republican,” he says. “I am not trying to be political. It is not about what I have to say, it’s about what Americans have to say.

I would like to have as many perspectives as possible. The object is to stay neutral.”

About 5 percent of the people who walk by the van take a card and disagree and keep moving. By the end of his stay in Denver, Heideman came up with 137 stories from people who wrote what they felt as he stopped them or they stopped to see what the commotion around the van was about.

Someone named VonHell-Fire ‘09 on MySpace writes, “ ‘Thug Life’ hoping all of his criminal endeavors will pay off.” One man writes, “I sold my body!” Another person, responding to an onlooker’s comment – “Get a job” – writes, “Give me one.”

See **Work**, p. 10

By The Numbers

7

The number of days between the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. and passage of the U.S. Civil Rights Act (see page 10).

26.6

The salary, in millions of dollars, of the CEO of Procter and Gamble (see page 14).

6

The number of years artist Kevin T. Kelly worked in New York City (see page 16).

16

The date in March when Linda Zachary died (see page 14).

137

The number of stories elicited by the question, "How has the recession affected you?" (see page 1).

3-in-27

The number of field goals missed by Texas kicker Hunter Lawrence (see page 13).

1,740

The number of citations for public drinking issued by the Portland Police Department (see page 5).

12

The age at which a Toledo girl was made a sex slave (see page 3).

3,000

The number of empty buildings in Cincinnati (see page 1).

4

The number of cloves of garlic in Veggie Spaghetti (see page 8).

Correction

An article in the April 1 edition ("Eight Minutes Behind Prison Bars") misstated Ohio prison overcrowding. The article should have said that state prisons are at 130 percent of capacity.

Streetwise

By GREGORY FLANNERY
EDITOR

Painter Completes First U.N. Cases

Judge Mark Painter of Cincinnati, the only American on the new United Nations Appeals Tribunal (UNAT), returned April 2 from Geneva after the court's first session ever. Sitting for three weeks in Geneva, the court decided 33 appeals. After translation, the cases will be released and posted on the UN website later this month. The UNAT is the highest court of the new internal-justice system, instituted in 2009 to provide access to independent and professional courts for U.N. employees and management. The judges were elected by the General Assembly. Cases included disputes over employee promotions, discipline, pensions, sexual harassment, contract matters and other issues. Because the court is new, the first cases begin the **development of the U.N.'s internal law**.

"We had originally scheduled 27 cases, but we added more," said Inés Weinberg de Roca, the court's president. "One goal of the new system is timely justice, so we want cases to move as fast as is reasonable,"

Painter is a former judge with the Ohio First District Court of Appeals. In addition to him and Weinberg de Roca of Argentina, the other judges are Jean Courtial of France, Sophia Adinyira of Ghana, Kamaljit Singh Garewal of India, Rose Boyko of Canada and Luis Maria Simón of Uruguay.

We Were Only Kidding

The truth can now be told. So far as we know, the Cincinnati Center City Development Corp. (3CDC) isn't really planning to start a rickshaw line powered by homeless people, Hamilton County Sheriff Simon Leis Jr. doesn't really use waterboarding on prisoners, Bengals player Chad Ocho Cinco isn't really contemplating changing his name to Chad Acht Fünf and Cincinnati City Councilman Jeff Berding hasn't really been seen wearing a sign saying, "Help me, I'm an asshole." These were among stories published in our April 1-14 issue.

Satire is a dangerous business, because some people fail to see the humor. Others get taken in and believe what they read – and education isn't always a barrier to credulity. Thus, we are sorry to report, an attorney, a former congressional candidate and a person with a master's degree are among the **people who fell for the gag**, even though we tried to warn readers, posting "Fools of April" at the top of the two pages containing these stories. We won't tell you the names of the people who got pulled in. They know who they are.

Got to Keep Moving

This is no joke. So eager is the city of Denver, Colo., to keep homeless people from littering the landscape that it is **illegal to sit or lie down in public**, downtown areas between 7 a.m. and 9 p.m. We learned this while researching a story on the criminalization of homelessness in the United States and Canada (see "Being Homeless is Against the Law," issue of March 1-14). Tim Covi, editor of the *Denver VOICE* – a street paper – explains the anti-sitting law.

"The amazing thing is that it was passed in the spirit of the 10-year plan to end homelessness," he says. "This is going on all over the state right now. Communities are defaulting to 10-year plans, saying they're being proactive by trying to implement housing programs and such, but pass punitive laws or maintain them in the same breath as they adopt 10-year plans. It's like the carrot and the stick. They say they won't make arrests, they'll direct people to services, but that they're not going to tolerate people sitting around. The problem is that it sounds so rational and reasonable, it seems to impress people."

Kids Aren't Inanimate Objects

Maybe Hamilton County Prosecutor Joseph Deters was trying to sound rational and reasonable – or maybe he just wanted to impress people – when he denounced two suspects for allegedly giving sleep aids to children at Covenant Apostolic Church Day Care in Springfield Township. Both Pamela Hartley of Cleves and Donna Scott of Cincinnati were charged with three counts of child endangering. Deters's outrage was well placed. But we wish he'd choose his words more carefully. He issued a statement denouncing the alleged drugging of children.

"I understand how upset the parents of these children must be," the statement said. "Daycare workers are responsible for a very valuable commodity and must be held to a high standard."

Children are not commodities. **People are not commodities**. Language has consequences, and one possible result of viewing people as items to be bought and sold is that sometimes they are (see "Ohio is a Slave Market," page 3).

Streetvibes is an activist newspaper, advocating justice and building community. *Streetvibes* reports on economic issues, civil rights, the environment, the peace movement, spirituality and the struggle against homelessness and poverty. Distributed by people who are or once were homeless, in exchange for a \$1 donation, *Streetvibes* is published twice a month by the Greater Cincinnati Coalition for the Homeless.

Address:

117 East 12th Street
Cincinnati, OH 45202
Phone: 513.421.7803 x 12
Fax: 513.421.7813
Email: streetvibes2@yahoo.com
Website: www.cincihomeless.org
Blog: streetvibes.wordpress.com

Streetvibes Staff

Editor

Gregory Flannery

Art Director

Lynne Ausman

Graphics/Layout Intern

Veronica Glass

Vendor Coordinator

Jeni Jenkins

Contributing Writers

Michelle Dillingham, Samantha Groark, Margo Pierce, Paul Kopp, Jeremy Flannery, Michael Henson, David Heitfield, Valerie Fessler, Alecia A. Lott, Jeni Jenkins, Saad Ghosn, Lew Moores, Larry Gross, Eli Braun, Jesse Call

Photography/Artwork

Aimie Willhoite, Lynne Ausman, Anthony Williams, Vinit Murthy, Jon Hughes

Proofreaders

Jennifer Blalock
Lynn Baker
Jeremy Flannery

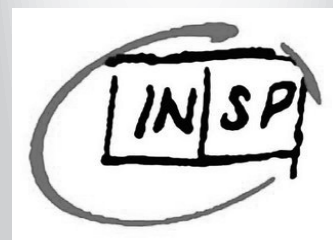
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Ohio Has a Thriving Slave Market

State begins studying human trafficking

By GREGORY FLANNERY
EDITOR

Ohio is one of only eight U.S. states that have not enacted laws against human trafficking. Yet Ohio is a thriving market for human beings, according to a new state study.

“Report on the Prevalence of Human Trafficking in Ohio,” issued by a subcommittee of the Ohio Trafficking in Persons Study Commission, is a first step in quantifying and addressing the problem of human trafficking in the state.

Some of its findings are startling:

- As a proportion of population, Toledo is the busiest slave market in the United States.
- Children who have been involved with the juvenile-justice or foster-care systems are at high risk for being trafficked.
- Police, hospitals, social workers and others largely do not understand and therefore do not properly respond to evidence of human trafficking.
- The report includes first-person accounts by former slaves in Ohio and concludes that the state has failed to respond to the tragedy of slavery within its borders.

Recommendations include legislation banning human trafficking, treating child prostitutes as victims rather than criminals and the establishment of safe houses across the state where slaves can seek refuge.

‘Most vulnerable’

Trafficking in humans is the second largest criminal enterprise in the world, exceeded only by illegal drug sales, the report says. Quantifying the number of victims is difficult because the trade in people is conducted underground, so the study used a series of models to develop estimates.

The numbers show the problem is not rare, with 783 foreign-born persons estimated to be trafficked into the labor or sex trade in Ohio and 1,078 youth who have been trafficked into the sex trade over the course of a year.

A variety of factors make Ohio fertile ground for the slave trade. One is geography.

“Ohio’s proximity to the Canadian border makes it possible for victims to be moved through Michigan and be trafficked in various venues throughout Ohio,” the report says. “Toronto’s international airport has been identified as one of the arrival destinations for some victims who are trafficked in Canada, while others are moved through to the United States.”

A growing population of immigrants also means a higher incidence of human trafficking.

“Most of the migrant labor in Ohio and the United States is concentrated in poorly regulated industries that demand cheap labor,” the report says. “Such industries include textiles (sweatshops), agriculture, restaurants, construction and domestic work.”

But not all slavery in the United States involves immigrants. Ohio’s growing poverty rate makes U.S. citizens vulnerable, too.

“Those domestic populations who are most vulnerable to human trafficking are the poor,” the report says. “In 2008, 1.5 million Ohioans lived below the poverty level. This is the highest rate since 1994. Since 2002, the population in Ohio grew a total of 1.2 percent while the number of those who are poor grew to over 40 percent. ... According to the National Center on Family Homelessness State Report Card (2009), Ohio is ranked 20th among the 50 states for child homelessness, but is ranked 42 out of 50 states for children’s vulnerability to homelessness, which in turn contributes to a higher vulnerability to child sex trafficking.”

Perhaps the most disturbing marker for children at risk of becoming trafficking victims is having



Media and law enforcement can miss human trafficking when they see prostitution.
Photo by Kay Chernush.

been involved in the very systems that are meant to help troubled kids, namely foster-care, children’s services and juvenile court.

“In Toledo, 77 percent of the trafficked youth had been involved with child welfare at some point in their lives and 52 percent had been involved in the foster care program,” the report says.

Toledo has received the most attention in Ohio for human trafficking, with more arrests than any U.S. cities other than Miami, Fla.; Portland, Ore.;

are involved in the underground economy practices of sex trafficking. Those are the criminal justice system, the social-service system and the health-care system. Each system’s response, it could be argued, has been either ineffective or insufficient.”

The study recommends several steps to improve Ohio’s response to the growing problem of human trafficking:

- Stop arresting and incarcerating child victims of sex trafficking.
- Pass a state anti-human trafficking law that includes provisions for protection, prevention and prosecution and that attends to the overall issue including supply (victims), demand (customers) and distribution (traffickers).
- Improve the oversight of massage parlors, agriculture and other “traditionally exploitative” markets
- Train health departments on human trafficking.
- Ask the Coalition on Homeless and Housing in Ohio, when interviewing homeless youth, to ask whether they have traded sex for housing or if pimps or boyfriends take their money.
- Appoint an ongoing committee to coordinate anti-trafficking activities of Immigration Customs Enforcement, the FBI, state and local law enforcement, child welfare, and the juvenile justice system.
- Have Ohio included in the national Human Trafficking Reporting System’s database to obtain better understanding of the problem in Ohio.

If Ohio is to stop human trafficking, a systemic overhaul is in order, according to the study. Rescuing slaves is only a first step. Take the case of “Julie,” a 12-year-old Toledo girl pressed into sexual bondage, servicing men at a Pennsylvania truck stop.

“With the help of a truck driver and an adult friend, also recruited from Toledo into the sex trade, they were able to escape and call the police,” the report says.

The traffickers were prosecuted, but Julie’s troubles didn’t end with her apparent liberation.

“Rescue out of the sex trafficking is not the end of the story, but the beginning of a longer, more difficult road to recovery,” the study says. “After returning to school, Julie was ridiculed by her classmates for being a ‘prostitute.’ As a result, she refused to attend school, quickly fell behind and quit.”

Six years later she was struggling to overcome another kind of slavery – addiction to crack cocaine.

“Given that the city of Toledo’s population is 298,446 and Lucas County’s is 440,456, this area can be considered to lead the nation for the number of traffickers produced and the number of victims recruited into the sex trade per capita.”
- Report on the Prevalence of Human Trafficking in Ohio

and Las Vegas, Nevada.

“Given that the city of Toledo’s population is 298,446 and Lucas County’s is 440,456, this area can be considered to lead the nation for the number of traffickers produced and the number of victims recruited into the sex trade per capita,” the report says.

In just the past four years, 60 U.S. citizens in Toledo have been identified as child victims of sex trafficking.

But the crime goes on throughout the state, with prosecutions for labor trafficking in Cincinnati, Columbus and Cleveland.

Rescue is only step one

The study details the horrors to which slaves are subjected – not just lack of wages or freedom of movement but also beatings, broken bones, malnutrition, rape and torture. After being freed, victims often suffer long-term psychological problems, sometimes leading to suicide.

“In 2007, one trafficked girl in Toledo who testified in a case outside of the state of Ohio returned home to find little support, no safe haven and no escape from the internal depression and external stigma she found,” the report says. “With a baby left to care for, she ended her life at 17 years old.”

The lack of support for victims isn’t merely a matter of tender feelings. Slaves are often treated as criminals – prosecuted for immigration violations or for engaging in prostitution, for example.

“Ohio’s response to child sex trafficking is weak,” the study says. “There are three conventional institutions that will intersect with trafficked youth who

The lack of support for victims isn’t merely a matter of tender feelings. Slaves are often treated as criminals – prosecuted for immigration violations or for engaging in prostitution.

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

sources on community development projects that could be used for jobs creation to help the unemployed and under-employed.

“Charity is bad for people,” La Botz said. “We don’t want hand-outs. They want a job. They want to contribute to society and have an identity.”

Jobs created under existing community-development projects are often temporary and don’t make a lasting impact on Cincinnati neighborhoods, the panelists said. In addition, developers don’t give preference to residents for these jobs, allowing them

to go to outsiders.

“These are jobs that don’t do anything for the community,” Molak said. “There should be a link between work in a

community and jobs. That link is not clear in this society.

... There is not much attempt made to help people learn trades and then create jobs that would actually do something useful in this city.”

Instead, the money should be used to rehabilitate homes in places such as Reading Road, as that would better benefit the citizens of Cincinnati, Molak suggested.

“There are all these beautiful empty buildings in Over-the-Rhine,” she said.

“There is no reason there should be 3,000 empty buildings in Cincinnati and no reason why we should have at any one time 900 homeless.”

Molak criticized the Cincinnati Center City Development Corp. (3CDC) and other downtown interests.

“The city council members have delegated their brains to 3CDC because they think these people know better. ... They build stadiums and they don’t fix things in the community that needs to be fixed,” she said.

The answer is for the community to take a stand and demand jobs, La Botz said.

“What has to happen—there has to be a social upheaval from below in this country,” he said. “It would be the best thing to build a movement of the working class people of this city and help to set them in motion.”

But not everyone in the au-

dience was buying in to the idea that jobs creation was a solution.

“Americans generally need to recalibrate their expectations,” said one audience member who identified himself as experiencing homelessness. “You live in a society which your parents created. Their expectations might be unrealistic. You have competition that they never experienced or anticipated. ... I don’t know if jobs should be the end-all in this country.”

One audience member asked the panelists, “Demand jobs from who?”

All the panelists explained that they felt the government should create jobs, even if this means increased taxes.

All the panelists also agreed that organizations such as 3CDC try to make it look as if they take the needs and viewpoints of community members into consideration and

have made redevelopment a democratic process. But that is where it ends, according to the panelists: Meetings at which input is solicited are simply “smokescreens” at which developers “put up a façade” that they care about input from the neighborhoods they are changing.

La Botz accused developers of engaging in “ethnic cleansing and class cleansing” to remove people of color and people experiencing poverty from Cincinnati neighborhoods.

“These are not democratic processes anywhere,” he said. “We live in a society where banks rule. I think the banks and corporations which dominate our society are institutions that have outlived their time. We have to become the abolitionists of the corporations to become a democratic nation.”

Letters to the Editor

The Land of the Po

To the Editor:

Such is life in the Land of the PO and those homeless in Cincinnati, Ohio, the Nasty Natty – Know place like it in the World. We sit around and discuss the ills and proudly display the wounds given in the life of poverty and disappointment of being deserted by our families who have it so much better, almost as if a sort of pride in infirmity is present.

There is the use of canes, as if all should lose the so human trait of bi-pedal-ing lacking them there walking skills. And we parade our injuries as if medals, our illnesses as if they are something to be desired, to accept and be prone to get and bask in the painful glory of being well, all messed up abiding with this sort of do-nothing spirit.

My Me noticed that especially in the land of the homeless or the dire strait of being just poor there seems to be a certain amount of Unlikely Glee. Which is most likely found in that anticipation of a monthly check issued for a real or exaggerated, sometimes imagined, usually mental condition. And too many times we just hope for the status of that mental impairment as a Governmental Approved Check.

Disability which pays the rent by the payee and buys the dope because you no longer need to work and you have nothing else to do like manage you own little piece of First of the Month Money. It is a strange selection of the meaning of status with just a hint of prejudice within this gargantuan fiction of holding wealth.

My I knew for this sort of fantasized certainty that this privilege of being proud held too many aspects of elation, considering being held captive so far below at the Gott Damn Bottom of that there poverty line totem pole. Once in a while, standing in one of the too many Free Food Lines, a statement is made that was the truth but lord knows unfortunately this truth it should never be.

The positioning of anyone at this location or station within this so beautiful life is really sad and depressing and just miserable. My own humble opinion is that being Po is nowhere that anyone desires or fondly wishes to become, and the Land of the Po and those in this city who choose to visit down here call us Po people and Homeless folk.

“The people who ain’t got nothing ... those of you on the street.”

These co-cohabitants just kinda smirk in that slander, being assured that they at least got more than us, as they put it, more than them if indeed they merely have housing; however, the fact that they are present – not in a voluntary way as in a civic duty capacity like the volunteers at the soup kitchens – is evidence that they, too, ain’t got that much. You see, they stand in the same line with all of us “ain’t got nothings” to feel as if what they got is no less but so much more. Well, it ain’t.

You ain’t got nothin’ either and that, my friends, is a crime against nature. It sucks to be poor in Cincinnati, the Nasty Natty Know place like it in the World.

Walter Madison Washington Jr.
Over-the-Rhine

Eloquent Memorial

To the Editor:

“A voice is a human gift; it should be cherished and used, to utter fully human speech as possible. Powerlessness and silence go together.” Margaret Atwood’s words are a reminder of just how important having a voice in society is. In the world today, this human right has become a rare luxury. Through tyranny and fear, voice has been stripped from millions of human beings, whether it be because of their nationality, their religion or their sexual orientation.

But where this loss also has a major effect is in economic status. Those who suffer from being homeless not only live without material positions, but without a voice of their own. In losing that right, these people lose a part of their dignity, of their persona, of themselves. The cover article in the Jan. 1 edition of *Streetvibes* says it all. “May They Finally Rest in Peace” is the title of Paul Kopp’s article, a heartening piece about those homeless who passed away in 2009.

Kopp tells the story of many homeless individuals who died this past year and broaches a salient point about the effect of this condition. Homelessness strips a person of his or her voice in society. Too often homelessness is misconstrued as a result of laziness and poor choices by society. But this perception is often a falsehood.

Homelessness can happen to anyone. It is often a matter of luck or health. And even in those situations of bad choices, those choices have root. They have root in family history, in severe addiction. But what brings one to homelessness is hardly the issue compared to the effect of the actual condition. As Kopp eloquently writes, “It seems that those who are homeless have lost their voice in society. Though they suffer from problems similar to those who judge them, they are ridiculed for their mistakes and viewed as a lesser class.”

A voice is a human right. It is a personal definition. It is a mark of identity. Those who pass away without having the opportunity to have that voice need to be remembered. They were people. They deserve that much.

Cody Pomeranz
Cincinnati

Unique Content

To the Editor:

I want to express my appreciation for your last issue (March 15-31).

The two front-page articles (City Ignores Plea for Fair Hiring” and “Council Turns Backs on Metropole Tenants”) were quite interesting, and neither were something that I was likely to see in another place. Keep up the good work!

I am a regular customer of the *Streetvibes* vendor who occasionally sells your paper outside of Saint Monica-Saint George after mass. He has been doing it for some time and is always a gentleman.

Lawrence J. Mazlack
Clifton

Street Drinking and Free Markets

The value and the cost of public sobriety

By AMANDA WALDROUPE
STREET NEWS SERVICE

Portland, Ore. – City Commissioner Amanda Fritz’s office and the Office of Neighbourhood Involvement (ONI) is attempting to decrease the amount of public drinking in downtown Portland by convincing grocery storeowners to voluntarily not carry certain kinds of alcoholic beverages.

But all the initiative is resulting in so far is fury from grocery-store owners and collective agreement that it is not a real solution, with only a fraction of them agreeing to comply.

“VibrantPDX,” as the initiative is called, is a voluntary agreement between grocery stores and the Office of Neighbourhood Involvement not to sell alcoholic beverages with high-alcohol content. That includes malt liquor and beer with names such as Old English 800, Steel Reserve, Milwaukie’s Best Ice and Camo Malt Liquor.

Sixty-seven grocery stores within assigned limits of the city’s downtown area have been asked to sign an agreement. The purpose of the program is to decrease what proponents

Neighbourhood Involvement, says another group of concern are teenagers and people in their twenties drinking in public while on their way to shows, house parties and other social outings. Another population of street drinkers, Marchetti says, are youths known by the police to favor boxed wine.

Proponents of the alcohol ban say street drinking leads to other livability issues, such as aggressive panhandling, public urination and defecation and an increase in littering.

The Downtown Neighbourhood Association, Old Town/Chinatown Neighbourhood Association, Old Town Chinatown Business Association, Downtown Retail Council, Travel Portland and the social service agency Central City Concern (founded in 1979 to specifically provide services for people known as “public inebriates”) support the initiative.

“We would like to see a limit on the accessibility of certain types of alcohol that are more amenable to chronic alcoholism that people are dying from,” says Ed Blackburn, executive director of Central City Concern. “I can’t think of a good reason to keep these high-level alcoholic beverages available.”

“These high-alcohol volume drinks are pretty marketed to our types of clients,” Mattsson says.

In exchange for entering into the agreement, Marchetti told storeowners that they would be recognized by Commissioner Fritz for being socially responsible and would have their store logos prominently displayed on her Web site.

Public meetings with storeowners were held Feb. 4 and 18 and March 4. The meetings, Marchetti says, were designed to solicit feedback from storeowners about the agreement.

“This is meant to be a collaborative effort,” she says.

But from the moment the public process got out of the gate, there were problems.

The economics of microbrews

The first meeting Feb. 4 was attended by approximately 20 storeowners. All expressed concern with the agreement as it had been

are some of the most popular products at the stores.

Street Roots interviewed nine storeowners for this article. Three requested anonymity because they feared political backlash from the city and the Oregon Liquor Control Commission (OLCC). For this article, they will be referred to as Storeowner #1, Storeowner #2 and Storeowner #3.

Owners expressed concern about how the agreement drafted at the first meeting would impact their sales.

“In this economy, I can’t believe that they’re trying to do something like this when so many small businesses are struggling,” Storeowner

The Portland Police Bureau gave 1,740 citations for public drinking in downtown Portland in 2009. That accounts for 53 percent of all public drinking in the city. Twenty-five percent of all individuals being held in detox came from the downtown area.

#3 says.

Boyer recognizes that concern and says that economic considerations have stopped some owners from signing the agreement.

“It’s a tough pitch to make in a rough economy,” he says.

Doug Peterson, owner of Peterson’s Convenience Stores, says 10 percent of his store’s sales are in beer. One storeowner said his sales could drop by as much as 20 percent. Chris Girard, the owner of Plaid Pantry, is skeptical that sales would be impacted, based upon his store’s experience in Seattle.

Boyer argued during the first meeting that the grocery stores would ultimately become more profitable because stores would gain customers who in the past had been unwilling to shop at those stores.

Storeowners argued that the reason their sales would be so negatively impacted is that very few of their customers are street drinkers.

“I’m not catering to these people,” Peterson says, referring to the majority of his customers as “middle America” people.

One owner used the term “smorgasbord” to describe his clientele. During the first public meeting, it was expressed loud and clear that condo owners, Portland State University students, culinary students, tourists, people on their way home from work, middle-income and even higher-income people represent the majority of the people doing business at grocery stores.

“We have a lot of customers that prefer the lower cost beer without abusing it,” Girard says.

Girard’s point gets at a problem with the alcohol ban more basic and philosophical than impacted sales.

Some business owners feel like they are being told what to and what not to sell as it is. Many

would only say off the record that the city is acting inappropriately when telling businesses what to do. The program, one owner says, negatively impacts free enterprise and limits an individual’s ability, one said, to exercise free will.

“Let the consumer decide,” Peterson says. Owners, especially Peterson, argued that much of the agreement unfairly penalized stores.

“The problem is pretty much identified with cheap, high-alcohol content,” Peterson says. “The microbrews are not cheap. The prices are too high for street drinkers.”

As a result of the initial meetings, Oregon microbrews are now listed as an exception to the ban. Sixteen-ounce singles and six-packs were also listed as exceptions.



Malt liquor is among the products targeted in downtown Portland.
Photo by Amanda Waldroupe.

call “street drinking” or drinking in public. It is illegal in Portland, and offenders are given a citation, which does not come with fines or other types of punishment.

The Portland Police Bureau gave 1,740 citations for public drinking in downtown Portland in 2009. That accounts for 53 percent of all public drinking in the city. Twenty-five percent of all individuals being held in detox came from the downtown area.

Steve Mattsson, the manager of Hooper Detox’s sobering station for intoxicated individuals, says the station has 12,000 admissions a year. Fifty percent of those people will return “on a repeated basis,” he says. In his mind, there is no doubt that there is a street drinking problem.

“Over the last two years, one of the most frequent complaints we get were problems around street drinking,” says Mark Friedman, a Central Precinct officer.

“It is a compelling problem in a small area,” says Theresa Marchetti, ONI’s liquor license specialist.

She emphasizes that it is a location-based – not a store-based – problem.

“(And) it’s not a problem we can really ignore,” Marchetti says.

Sources for this story largely pointed to homeless people when describing the population of street drinkers. But Mike Boyer, a crime prevention specialist in the Office of

“We would like to see a limit on the accessibility of certain types of alcohol that are more amenable to chronic alcoholism that people are dying from. I can’t think of a good reason to keep these high-level alcoholic beverages available.”
~Ed Blackburn, executive director of Central City Concern.

Street Drinking and Free Markets

CONTINUED FROM P. 5

As a result of the changes, Peterson says he probably will not have a problem signing the agreement. Girard would like a few more exceptions to be made so Plaid Pantry could continue carrying particular types of popular beer. He has been working with ONI to see whether those changes could be approved. If they are, he will sign on.

Sketchy data

The core data and statistics ONI used when crafting the ban agreement are not the citation reports from the Portland Police Bureau, but from Portland Patrol, Inc., according to Marchetti.

Portland Patrol, Inc., a private security firm that contracts with the Portland Business Alliance to patrol downtown Portland, conducted a targeted mission between May 21 and June 17 last year to make contact with people drinking in public to find out what kind of alcohol they were drinking, where they were drinking it and what size container it was in. Portland Patrol officers made 289 contacts during that time.

Portland Patrol, Inc. would not make the records available to Street Roots (the records are not public). Nor was the data made available during any of the three meetings.

But a spreadsheet of compiled data provided by the Office of Neighbourhood Involvement shows that the common containers were 16- and 24-ounce bottles and cans of beer with an alcohol content of 5.9 percent per ounce.

“I don’t think (the street drinking problem) is overwhelming, I do think that the reason they are finding so many street drinkers in downtown Portland is that we have, through the (Portland Business Alliance), we have (Portland Patrol, Inc.),”
- Chris Girard

(For comparison, Deschutes Brewery’s Mirror Pond Pale Ale is 4.53 percent alcohol per ounce.)

Many storeowners said they were suspicious of the data at the Feb. 4 meeting. In what parts of downtown were the street drinkers found? What exactly did the statistics show? How was ONI making a connection between street

drinking and the stores?

There are two reasons why the data would cause concern. First, Portland Patrol only patrols downtown. Any street drinking that takes place in inner Southeast Portland, for example, would not have been recorded or noticed by ONI. Second is the timing of Portland Patrol’s mission. The summer months in Portland, though glorious for much-awaited sunlight and farmers’ markets, are also the time when there is a noticeable influx of people and activity on the streets.

“I don’t think (the street drinking problem) is overwhelming,” Girard says. “I do think that the reason they are finding so many street drinkers in downtown Portland is that we have, through the (Portland Business Alliance), we have (Portland Patrol, Inc.),” Girard says.

Not so voluntary

Responses from all stores were expected by March 12. April 1 is the date set for the beginning of the alcohol ban. A review will take place in October, according to Marchetti, to review how well the program is working and if there

were any “unintended consequences.”

As of March 17, only 12 of 67 stores had signed the agreement.

Marchetti says she is not surprised more storeowners have not signed up, because the final draft of the agreement was not available until late in the week of March 8. Marchetti and Boyer were conducting street outreach to each store to make a last-ditch effort to get stores to sign the agreement.

What the success of the program depends on, Boyer says, is bigger stores in the downtown area, such as Safeway, Whole Foods and Plaid Pantry, signing the agreement. Small stores will feel compelled to sign on if there is a critical mass.

“If they don’t take the lead and step forward, you’re not going to get 100 percent compliance,” Boyer says.

Marchetti is willing to up the ante if compliance isn’t voluntary.

City council can be petitioned to allow Marchetti to work with OLCC to declare downtown Portland an “alcohol impact” area. Doing so would create mandatory guidelines storeowners would be required to follow regarding types of alcohol they could and could not carry.

A similar string of events happened in Seattle. Seattle declared parts of its downtown “alcohol impact” areas in 2003 to respond to problems associated with street drinking. The program was voluntary at first. But businesses were not willing to voluntarily stop carrying particular types of alcohol because they were concerned “it was going to hit their bottom line,” says Kimberly Archie, the deputy director of Seattle’s Department of Neighbourhoods.

As a result, “we weren’t seeing any improvement in chronic public inebriation,” Archie says.

Seattle petitioned the Washington State Liquor Control Board in 2006 to make the alcohol ban mandatory. Archie says there were no legal repercussions. Since then statistics have shown a 21 percent decrease in admissions to detox centers, a 35 percent decrease in calls to the police and a 61 percent decrease of drinking in parks.

Marchetti is hoping for similar results, voluntary or mandatory. An extensive public process is required before the OLCC can make a recommendation that the alcohol ban be mandatory. Marchetti says it would take at least a year, starting late this summer or early fall.

‘Help people get off the streets’

Almost everyone interviewed for this article thinks downtown Portland has a street drinking problem. But no one will stand behind the street drinking initiative as a solution to street drinking. At best, it will mitigate the problem.

“It makes it harder for them to get a lot of alcohol,” Blackburn says. “I would never suggest that it’s a cure to this type of alcoholism.”

“We don’t expect this to eliminate the problem,” Marchetti says.

She does expect it to decrease.

Some think it will simply decrease because street drinking will move to other areas of the city.

“There are at least four stores just on the other side of the Interstate 405,” Storeowner #3 says. “They can walk over there. What’s the difference? It doesn’t make any sense to me.”

It is not possible, Marchetti says, to make the program citywide because “there are definite pockets of places that exhibit greater problems

than other places. It’s not feasible.”

Spreading out the social services and low-income housing, self-policing stores, increasing fines and punishment for street drinking and increasing funding for treatment were all ideas offered by storeowners.

Many storeowners already make efforts to self-police whom they sell alcohol to, checking a person’s ID or asking for rent receipts given out by hotels to ensure that a customer has a place to take the alcohol to.

“We’ll sell them alcohol if they have a street address,” Peterson says.

“It’s easy to do,” Storeowner #1 says.

This storeowner also thought it would be beneficial to require all store clerks to take the same class the OLCC requires of servers at bars and restaurants. Part of what that class teaches is how to recognize people who are visibly intoxicated. Clerks who sell alcohol to such people, or to people whom they know are chronic drinkers, should not have jobs at grocery stores, the storeowner says.

Boyer and Marchetti said that, when the VibrantPDX initiative was being crafted, there was no effort to include a component that would increase the amount of alcohol treatment available or create some sort of outreach or education program for individuals engaged in street drinking. “This is the start of the efforts,” Boyer says.

But is there an effort to partner with Multnomah County, which is the principal funder for alcohol treatment in the county, to increase spending or outreach for alcohol treatment?

“There is not a well-thought out plan at this point,” Boyer says.

Marchetti says treatment was not considered along with the alcohol ban because “our expertise and understanding of the problem is more on the supply line.” Marchetti says she is also not sure if alcohol treatment is relevant.

“I don’t think we could say that all of the street drinkers are alcoholics,” she says.

As Seattle crafted its alcoholic impact areas, investing further in alcohol treatment was not considered, Archie says. Yet she recognizes that Seattle’s policy is not “a total solution to the problem.”

Storeowner #2, along with a few other storeowners, said he would be willing to donate the amount of money lost in sales as a result of the alcohol ban – or at least a fraction – to social-service agencies that provide alcohol treatment. There is a precedent for business associations such as the Portland Business Alliance putting their financial resources toward creating programs and policies that address social problems.

“In the long run, what solves the problem is providing services that help people get off the streets and support them in efforts to stop their drinking,” Blackburn says.

“I would say that every single one of our clients want treatment,” Mattsson says.

But the likelihood that they will actually enter a treatment program is slim. Ten people are discharged from Hooper each day. Only 10 treatment slots open up per month. That means that people who have the potential to successfully complete a treatment program are only cycling through detox, over and over again.

“It’s not the best way to treat these clients,” Mattsson says. “We have to expect we’re going to see them over again.”

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“In the long run, what solves the problem is providing services that help people get off the streets and support them in efforts to stop their drinking.”
- Ed Blackburn





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Poverty, Choice and Serenity

Deprivation and what we do with it

We had a pretty rugged winter this year, but I know at least two people who slept out-of-doors through the whole of it.

One is a client. Driven by alcohol and poverty, he spent his nights sleeping behind a downtown restaurant. On the really bad nights, he snuck into a parking garage. He laughs about the experience, but there is an edge to his laughter. He's in his forties now. How many more winters like this can he take?

I also have a friend who lives a pretty rugged life. He sleeps outside year-round, even in the harshest weather. He owns nothing, or next to nothing. If he wants

to get somewhere, he usually walks. He will walk for miles. He's often alone for long stretches of time and really expects to stay that way.

But he suffers little, if at all, from the rigors of his life. Although he lives in poverty, he is not poor. And he has a serenity and peace of mind, something we all say we value, even if we don't do much to get it.

My friend is a Trappist monk, one of many men and women who, in joining a contemplative order, take a vow of poverty. (They also usually take a vow of chastity and obedience as well, but those are way out of my topic.)

There is a tradition in literature and song that associates poverty and serenity. “The world is too much with us,” the poet tells us. “Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers.” The poetry of William Blake is haunted by the horrors of urban poverty, which he contrasts to the simple life of the rural poor. Yeats’s “Lake Isle of Innisfree,” Thoreau’s *Walden*, and Willie Nelson’s “Luckenback Texas” are all of the same mythic material. Blow up your TV, sings John Prine:

*... Throw away your papers,
Go to the country,
Build you a home.
Plant a little garden,
Eat a lot of peaches,
Try and find Jesus
On your own.*

It works for my friend. A photographer and poet, he is one of the happiest and most creative men I know. There is something about giving up the race for more money and more status that clarifies the mind, lifts the spirit and soothes the soul. There is a sort of back-to-the-land, off-the-grid, out-of-the-rat-race poverty celebrated by these poems, stories and songs that is characterized by simplicity, dignity, orderliness, calm and serenity. It is a poverty of freedom and unfettered-ness. It improves the mind and spirit. It is the poverty of the saints. Is it real? My friend lives it.

So if poverty is so damn good for us, why don't more of us choose poverty? And why aren't more poor people as happy as my friend?

The poverty most of us see is characterized instead by dirt, disease, uncertainty, violence, stress, trauma, indignity, scorn, disorderliness, blocked goals, contempt and self-contempt.

Why should it be this way? Why can't poor people get themselves together and make the best of a bad situation? Why doesn't their

poverty lead to spiritual renewal like that of these others?

Actually, most people in poverty do make the best of a bad situation. And many achieve great spiritual levels. I have had great spiritual teachers from among the poor.

I believe it has nothing to do with he weakness or failure of the individuals, and everything to do with the difference between voluntary and imposed poverty. Choice, in certain matters, makes all the difference. For example, going back to my friend the monk, there are only two sorts of people who sleep in a cell: monastics and prisoners. The monk chooses to take to his or her cell and can revoke that choice at any moment. The prisoner is stuck in his or her cell until the state decides. There is a world of difference between going on a fast and having your food stamps stolen. If I'm on a fast, I can choose when to start eating again. If I have been thrust into poverty, I don't necessarily have the choice.

Choice is everything when it comes to the consequences of deprivation. But there is more than one kind of choice.

There is the choice some people make to go into voluntary poverty. They are the most likely to gain something on a spiritual or personal level from the experience of poverty. They go into it with a specific agenda; and there is a vast body of teaching, both religious and secular, that will take them through the experience. The other great advantage of voluntary poverty is that you can always leave. I've known several people enter monasteries, then return to their lives, both spiritually and monetarily better off.

Then there are those who “choose” poverty by their actions. They gamble away their savings, either at the slots or in the stock market. They drink it up and piss it out. They snort it up their nose or burn it up in a pipe. They might “choose” to be born into the wrong family and they might continue to make choices that compound their poverty: They have too many children, or have them too early. The wrong marriage or the wrong divorce can have disastrous consequences on a person’s finances.

But none of these choices involves an intention to become poor. People enter poverty for a variety of reasons, many of which have nothing at all to do with choices they make (corporate layoffs, outsourcing, an injury, an illness – any one of these will do the job nicely).

People who enter voluntary poverty generally benefit from it. People who have poverty thrust on them generally suffer from it. Why?

I read recently of Saint Juan of the Cross, a Spanish monk who was thrown into prison and tortured for beliefs his tormentors could not understand. The result included the long poem we know of as “The Long Dark Night of the Soul.”

But we are not all saints.

Poverty, involuntary poverty, is not just an economic problem. Poverty is a wound to the psyche. Some people have more wounds and deeper wounds than others, and it makes no sense to judge or to compare.

That I have decided to make something positive out of degradation does not mean it stopped being degradation.

Perhaps, instead of judging or comparing, we should consider eliminating the degradations of involuntary poverty.

I believe it has nothing to do with the weakness or failure of the individuals, and everything to do with the difference between voluntary and imposed poverty. Choice, in certain matters, makes all the difference.

Michael Henson is author of *Ransack*, *A Small Room with Trouble on My Mind*, *The Tao of Longing* and *Crow Call*.

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“Feed Me, Seymour, Feed Me All Night Long...”



Photo by Jeni Jenkins.

By JENI JENKINS
STAFF WRITER

This dish is one that I have enjoyed weekly most of my life. My mother says that, when I was a child, I would have eaten spaghetti for breakfast, lunch and dinner, if she would have allowed it. Apparently when I was too young to even pronounce my words correctly, I would beg her for “basgetti.” Even as an adult, when I return home for visits, she teases me playfully, indicating her sarcastic surprise when I voice my desire to make spaghetti. This dish is one of the many spaghetti recipe variations I have explored over the years. This has become my favorite way to make spaghetti, combining my love for veggies, red sauce and stringy noodles.

Veggie Spaghetti

Serving Size: 3-4 bellies.

16-oz. package spaghetti or angel hair noodles
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 white onion chopped
4 cloves garlic, minced
1 zucchini squash, diced
2 14.5-oz. cans stewed tomatoes, undrained
6-oz. can tomato paste
1/8 cup sugar
2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
3 teaspoons dried basil or 1/4 cup chopped fresh basil
1 teaspoon dried oregano or 3 tablespoons chopped fresh oregano
2.25-oz can black olives, undrained

1. Begin preparing the noodles as directed.
2. Heat 2 tablespoons oil in a large skillet over medium low heat and sauté the onion and garlic 3-4 minutes until the onions turn translucent.
3. Add zucchini to the onions and garlic and sauté an additional 2 minutes.
4. Turn the heat up slightly to medium high and add the stewed tomatoes. Cook approximately 2 minutes, stirring continuously.
5. In a bowl, combine the tomato paste, oregano, basil and sugar. Stir with a spoon until smooth. Carefully add the mix to the skillet.
6. Add the undrained olives and stir, simmer an additional 4 minutes.
7. Spoon generous helpings of the prepared sauce over the finished noodles.
8. For added yum factor, sprinkle shredded cheddar cheese over the hot sauce and serve with garlic bread and fresh salad.
9. Voila, FEED!

Artwork By Anthony Williams



Say What?!

The fundamental rights of humanity are, first: the right of habitation; second, the right to move freely; third, the right to the soil and subsoil, and to the use of it; fourth, the right of freedom of labor and of exchange; fifth, the right to justice; sixth, the right to live within a natural national organization; and seventh, the right to education.
- Albert Schweitzer

Poetry is the Language of the People, and All is Poesy, and All is Holy

By Carolyn R. Hanks

I go among the people of the earth
Listening and hearing all languages and manners of speech; I wander
Among the fathers and sons of the earth and I hear the cries of their children
And their children's children, and to my ears all is Poesy. I go also
Among the mothers and daughters and sons; I hear the holy sounds of their voices,
All poetry, and all holy. I was told that the Word is a manifestation of thought:
So in the beginning, the Great mother-Father God/Goddess was the Word, and the
Word became Light, and there was Light. So also there was darkness, as well as
All seasons and all days and nights, and also all holy.
My lips were opened and I sang a song, it became my song for the people,
And I, too, became holy, in the presence of the Great Spirit, whose many names
Are Mother Walking Bear, Sister Moon and Brother Wolf and Goddess Kali and
Mother of the sons and daughters of men and women and of God,
And all is Poesy, all is Holy.



Art by Steven Paul Lansky

Poem of Inaction

By Steven Paul Lansky

yes
i like doctrine of inaction
it is the same as action
only without movement
presence of stillness
lake is calm
glass
mirror
very reflective

The Ghost Bird

By Chelsea Ostrow

Through searing heat,
In a sand coated tent hospital,
A whip of pain,
Fighting for life,
The wheeze of a respirator greets
Artistic Expression You've Been Dreaming Of.
Welcome to the depths of the
Beautiful Stranger.
Words create Worlds
Cementing the future.
New life begins.
A vast trove of buried treasure
Recycling Instrument of Remembrance
Introducing a Revolutionary New Dimension In
The Happiness Effect.
Nadav Kander recommends using a Permanent Birth Control.
Something to put about.
It lives!
Real ingredients are ingredients you understand.
Welcome back.

Better than Rust

By Spencer Ledyard

"My god," Laura said.
As she felt the red,
Thick weight of welling tears.
"My dear, it's been years."

"Oh, I know. Like ten, right?
That is a while, a good while.
So, what are you doing?
Kids and a family, like everyone else?"

"I work here, downtown,
But no children, I'm not wed.
I'm engaged to Harry Brown
From high school," Laura said.

"Really! My old Harry!
I haven't thought of him in so long.
We went to the Spring Formal!
In 10th grade ... 10th grade."

Laura said, "Oh yes,
You wore that blue dress
And I was there with ...
Umm ... Joseph Smith?"

"Joey was there but
I think he was with Cheryl then
'Cause you started dating him
After I broke up with Harry."

"You could be right,"
Laura said, "I don't recall.
Anyway, later tonight
We've got the Mayor's ball."

"So you got to be going.
Okay, sure, see ya later.
Tell Harry I said hi. And,
Laura, you have a good night."

"Well, now, hold on ... how ...
Is there something I can,
Can do for you, like, now?"
Laura said, wringing her hands.

"You got a couple bucks,
That would be good. And
Don't ask me how it happened.
This is just how things are."

Story World

By Chelsea Ostrow

Little Bo Peep fucked her sheep
Maiden Mary was appalled
This caused such a ruckus,
The Lady in the Shoe stopped fucking Douglas
And all her kids were mauled.

The Three Blind Mice heard this thrice
they couldn't imagine the sight!
Jack and Jill got a divorce
and Jack ran off with Snow White
The Seven Dwarfs shot Jack in the head
after he took the Little Mermaid to bed.

The entire time Alice thought she was just a little brain dead
but truth be told she took a hold
of what the White Rabbit was dealing.
She followed the Rabbit down his hole
hoping he'd put it in hers,
she got on her knees, simply said please
and the Rabbit gave it to Alice while kneeling.
Alice died and lost her pride.
and that was the end of that.

Now you know that what you're told can't be all but true.
Take into consideration the different aspects of information and everything
you thought you once knew.

King's Death Led to Fair Housing

Ending housing discrimination: The urgency marches on

By MICHELLE DILLINGHAM
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

One of my favorite quotations is credited to Otto von Bismarck: "Laws are like sausages. It's better not to see them being made." Yet one of my hobbies is to read about legislative history, sort of like how some people like to watch horror movies. Go figure.

To research this article, I reviewed the legislative history of the federal Fair Housing Act. The Fair Housing Act was adopted in 1968 and made it illegal to discriminate in housing transactions based on race, color, national origin, religion, gender, disability or familial status.

I discovered an article written by Jean Eberhart Dubofsky contemporaneous to the law's passage. It tells the story of how fair-housing legislation was added into the Civil Rights Act as an amendment by U.S. Sen. Walter Mondale in 1967. It is really fascinating but too lengthy to cover here. Near the end of the story, after much political maneuvering and debate, we find the bill referred to the House Rules Committee, where action was deferred and hearings were dragging on. On the morning of April 4, 1968, many feared the Senate's civil rights bill might perish in committee. That evening, Martin Luther King was assassinated.

"Martin Luther King's death accomplished one thing; it dislodged the Civil Rights Bill of 1968 from the Rules Committee," Dubofsky writes. "On April 8, shaken by the disorders in Washington, the committee concluded its hearings. ... On April 10, with National Guard troops called up to meet riot conditions in Washington still in the basement of the Capitol, the House debated fair housing. ... On April 11 the Civil Rights Act of 1968 became law. The new law begins with the following words: 'It is the policy of the United States to provide, within constitutional limits, for fair housing throughout the United States.' "

How bittersweet that King's tragic death catapulted fair housing into the civil rights bill, and his passing provided the urgency needed to help that

bill became law.

Fast-forward 42 years. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) declares 2010 a "Time to Act" – a slogan to reflect the urgency of ensuring fair housing. As time passes, new varieties of housing discrimination continue to rear their ugly heads. HUD reports that it "for the first time ever is examining the prevalence of housing discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity and discrimination based on a tenant's use of government assistance to pay rent." Forty-two years later we are still urgently fighting housing discrimination.

And then there are fair-housing issues related to land use and zoning. Two years ago the Cincinnati Planning Department proposed zoning text amendments that set limits on where certain organizations may serve certain people. Many citizens came out in opposition, including Elizabeth Brown, executive director of Housing Opportunities Made Equal (HOME), who testified that the proposed changes violate the Fair Housing Act. The planning

department did not pursue the text amendments, although they will undoubtedly resurface in another form.

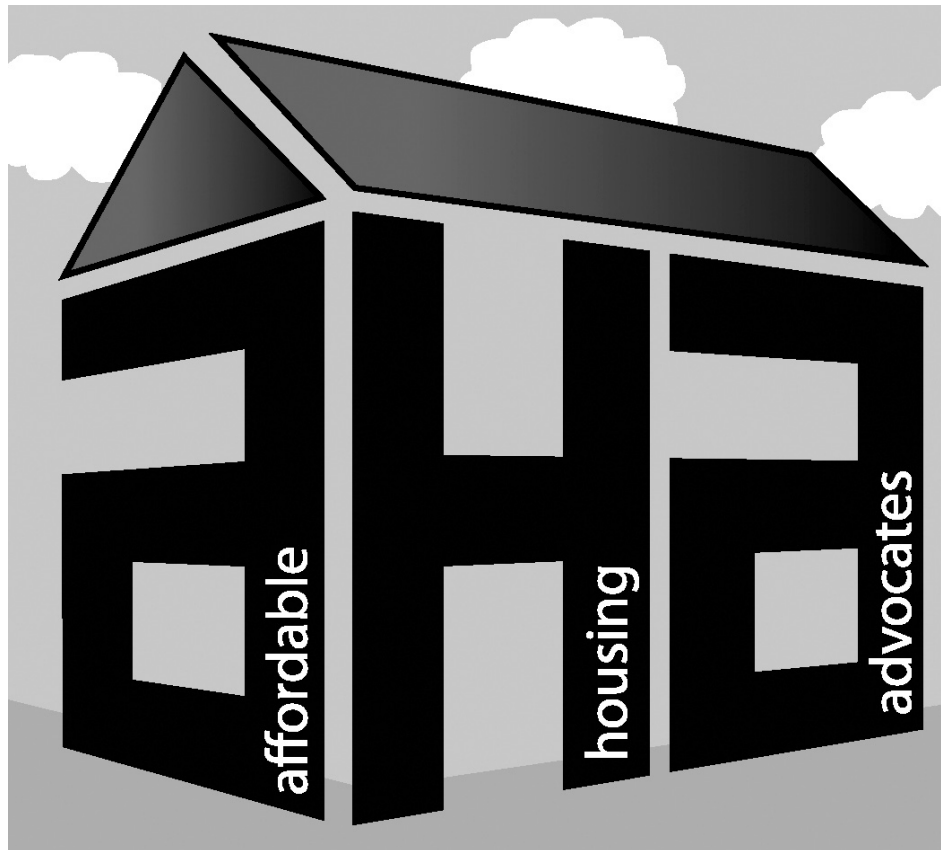
I was recently asked to serve on behalf of Affordable Housing Advocates on the City/County Fair Housing Advisory Committee. Fair housing is not the same as affordable housing. Affordability refers to one's ability to meet his or her housing needs. Fair housing refers to one's right to engage in housing transactions that are not influenced by race, color, national origin, religion, gender, disability or familial status. However, often the affordability and discrimination are connected, because many people who live in subsidized housing happen to be families, minorities and people with disabilities, which are protected groups under the Fair Housing Act.

The Fair Housing Committee's charge is to help identify strategies to implement the recommendations made in the document, "Impediments to Fair Housing in Hamilton County" written by HOME last year. This committee is also in place because

HUD requires municipalities that receive federal funding not only to refrain from discriminating, but also to exceed the basic requirements and affirmatively further fair housing. We gather for a noble cause, to make sure the recommendations made in HOME's report are not shelved but rather implemented.

This month, let us reflect on the untimely death of Martin Luther King Jr. and how it enabled us to have the Fair Housing Act. Learn about what your housing rights are. Help educate your friends, family and neighbors about housing discrimination. The Fair Housing Act protects all of us – black and white, male and female. We were all children once; and if we are lucky enough to live long, we will all have disabilities in old age.

For more information about your fair-housing rights, please contact Housing Opportunities Made Equal at 513-21-4663. HOME exists to eliminate illegal discrimination in housing, especially racial discrimination, and to promote balanced living patterns.



The Stories of the Man in the Van

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

A New Stage

The project is putting Heideman in a new stage in his life. A better understanding. He has never made a living at art before, but has been making it since he was 18. Most of his work has been two-dimensional oil paintings. Some galleries in Seattle have displayed the paintings. He was supposedly the youngest artist to ever display his work in the Woodside Braseth Gallery.

Before starting "The Man in The Van" project, Heideman was working on a screenplay. He eventually scrapped it, deciding that "The Man in the Van" project was a better way to express himself. He wants to try to build relationships again, so why not just start with the general public?

"I wanted to be less selfish ... have empathy," he says.

By letting others write, he thought he could reach out more to people.

"This is much more rewarding," Heideman says. "I don't want to become a preacher. I don't want to be political. The real goal is to get people out of their rut."

Since his visit to Denver, he has travelled the country and has experienced setbacks along the way. Sometimes he thought that he would not make it. But

he never gave up. Heideman reached his destination, Grand Rapids, Mich., for the Artprize competition, though things did not end up as he had planned. "The Man in The Van" did not even place in the top 100.

"That's OK," he says. "It wasn't about winning a big prize. ... I've been able to inspire a lot of people and spread a message of empathy and compassion."

Now, after a long road, Heideman is trying to get on with other parts of his life. He is moving to Seattle with a newfound sense of adventure. He has had a few offers from movie producers to discuss "possibilities."

"I'm also hoping to write a book about the whole experience (including transcribed stories), but that's tough right now because things are a little stressful," he says. "I've been living in a van for over one year now, and I'm ready to move on with my life."

But winning isn't everything.

"It's amazing what kind of rewards come when you have the courage to serve others," Heideman says.

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A Night Walk Reveals the Action

For the average street person, the onset of the night is the crown of the day. It often brings about fear – or perhaps relief from the constant shuffling of the day. Making one’s way to that place of refuge, which we call our spot, one can end the day with a bit of sleep. However, for some of us, it’s just the beginning of a part of our routine.

The night person is a small percentage of the overall, but is still a feature of the life of the street. They wear a telltale sign of the life-style. Often known by their movements, they are a breed of a different species. Living off of their wits, they maintain by whatever means necessary. Most are honest by nature, but the life of the street can change that.

We are out on the block. OK, let’s see what’s happening. Let’s go over to the “Bat Cave” (usually an abandoned building). Batman doesn’t live here, and the only Robin you’ll see is the one trying to turn a “trick,” or trick you out of something. The Bat Cave is a squatters’ paradise, usually set with electricity from a nearby building. Without running water, buckets or canteens are used for the water supply. The Bat Cave is furnished with discarded furniture that the occupants have found. Keeping with its name, the Bat Cave is only alive with action during the late night. The fluttering of arms and legs in swift movement in and out of the cave gives the impression of those who frequent the place, back and forth with-out direction.

There he is the houseman directing where to sit, who gets in and who leaves. His main job is to collect the entrance fee, usually a hit of dope or a few dollars. Everybody tending his own habit: 40-ounces being passed, a crack pipe being pushed or perhaps a joint being shared, each in their own world. Though it seems chaotic, there is order in the cave. The stays are generally short. When you have nothing left to share, it’s time for you to go; or when you have had your pleasure, you realize that it’s time for you to get back to the block to come up.

The residents of this humble abode are

in and out all night, only being caught by the first light of day. Then it’s time to wind down, to sleep most of the day. Amazingly, you might give it some kin to the old Temptations song, “Psychedelic Shack.” For those who frequent this place, it is where it’s at.

Of course a visit to the Bat Cave is not the only action of the night life. There is always the waiting game: waiting for the right person to come along or the right situation to occur. Vying to get what you seek, you have to spend time trudging back and forth, from block to block, seeking those who live like you do, doing the things that you do. Living on the edge, the street people are oblivious to danger in the normal sense. The only fear one has is of being stopped or detained by the police. The worst-case scenario is to end up in jail. The violence, competition, or other distractions

of the street pale in comparison to having to spend a night in the holding tank. There is no getting back that time you lose sitting in the Justice Center. Time, the most important element of the street life, cannot be wasted sitting in the can. Every moment of every day has to be utilized for the betterment of one’s condition, the hustle for survival.

Somehow you become invisible in the night as you duck and dodge through the streets. Taking in every step, you don’t miss a beat. Knowing where the action is, you start that way. Anticipating the scene, your mind picks the route. On this walk we see a huddle on this or that corner or cars passing. An occasional shout, an alert to which way to go, a nod signals that it’s right here. Often the walk is where the action is. Much more movement than if we are stuck in the Cave or held up in some house. It’s the darting in and out that attracts you, so you walk the way that you know something is happening. Number-one rule: Avoid conflict or dispute. There is enough mistrust and potential violence waiting.



Riccardo Taylor. Photo by Aimie Willhoite.

The later – or, if you will, the earlier – the hour, the slower things get. Feet starting to hurt from all the walking, eyes feeling heavy, you know it’s time to find that spot to sleep.

A few hours is all you expect. Hate to miss any action, but I’m done!

In places where most people would be appalled, the street person is right at home. A lot of us are cast into the role we play. You learn to go with the flow, so to speak. Still, that reality that things are different and that we can have a part of that eludes our senses. Chase the action, using up all of your facilities to come to the same con-

clusion. This becomes the mindset of those who live this way, and life goes on. The walk continues.

There is no getting back that time you lose sitting in the Justice Center. Time, the most important element of the street life, cannot be wasted sitting in the can. Every moment of every day has to be utilized for the betterment of one’s condition, the hustle for survival.

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Russian Women, American Men

A cultural experience between young adults

By JEREMY FLANNERY
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Five women from Russia visited Cincinnati in April 2003 to taste the sweet existence that is American. My roommates and I met them through their enrollment with the American Work Experience, a program that offers European college students a four-month summer adventure in the United States as low-wage workers. What was their American work experience? They became cashiers for McDonald's in Corryville and Chipotle in University Heights.

One of the women worked with one of my roommates. While at work she told him that they realized their landlord was "scary," and they needed a new place for the summer. That landlord must have been scary indeed if he compelled women from another nation to flee into the home of three unknown men. And so they moved into the vacant third-floor bedroom of the Corryville house we rented.

The women were very shy at first. The third floor had a kitchen and bathroom with a shower, but there was no way to bypass the second-floor living room, where my male roommates and I hung out, to access the rest of the house. Even so, I never saw our new roommates after leaving work from downtown and the rest of the evening. As a

gesture to show they seemed reclusive, I placed a cup of water next to their bedroom door every day. Maybe they thought it was some bizarre local custom – or simply considered it annoying.

After two weeks of this routine, the Russian women filed down the stairs one night to join us in the living room.

My roommates and I were the most American Americans in America at that time, so the ladies were fortunate to have us to guide them through Cincinnati. We pointed out such sights as Fountain Square and the concrete river that resembles the Rhine River in Deutschland. We told them the Taste of Cincinnati was approaching, one of the few times per year when hordes of suburbanites feel safe enough to visit downtown and trash it. We explained how University Heights becomes a lively locale thanks to the University of Cincinnati students, and we made sure the women knew how to reach University Hospital or call 911 for emergencies. We even said our local government is proficient with assisting people in need. And then we admitted we lied. At the time Cincinnati had a law requiring panhandlers to have licenses.

"Why would you need a permit to ask people for money on the streets if the U.S. has freedom of speech?" they asked. Good question.

One of the ladies fluently spoke Russian and German and learned some English words during her flight to the U.S. Whenever she couldn't complete a sentence in English, she would add her native language.

"I go to the university in Berlin and, um ... (insert many Russian words)."

The ladies laughed at our bewildered facial expressions. One was fluent with English and was dubbed the household translator. The other three understood varying degrees of English, but two often requested translations. When my roommates and I told jokes, their laughter became a chorus line, with the Berlin student excluded

from the crescendo as she awaited a full translation.

College tuition didn't exist at their universities in Russia, and they were required to study a second language by age 8. Cincinnati has more skyscrapers, while their Russian hometown provides more public transportation. These were the only significant differences they noted.

The women enjoyed reading the local newspapers and collected bundles of copies to take home. I was surprised. Who actually reads newspapers? They would huddle and read together as the household translator clarified the writing.

One of my male roommates prepared to smoke marijuana. He asked the women if they preferred that he didn't.

"It's OK," one of the ladies said. "We understand it is a part of your culture."

My roommates and I laughed, and the women seemed puzzled by our reaction.

"It's actually illegal in this country," I said. That is a cultural component of the "Land of the Free."

You might think it's inappropriate for unmarried women and men to live together. How would we situate cycles to clean our clothes? One of my roommates and I thought we were alone in the house one weekend afternoon. The Russian ladies left to visit the Newport Aquarium. Apparently the Berlin student thought she was alone because she came down the third-floor steps wearing a T-shirt and no pants. She tried to explain she needed to get her clothes from the dryer. We couldn't understand her, so she pendulously waved her hand, returned from the basement with her clothes and took them to her room – where she remained for the day. I hope she laughs at the memory now.

Living with these women for three months was an educational experience. They showed us the Russian alphabet and some words to construct basic sentences. We'd hear them say "knee," which is short for "nyet" or "no." If you don't speak Russian, it would sound like "knee, knee, knee," and you might think they were about to kickbox.

They cooked what they claimed to be Lebanese breakfast for us at 3 a.m. before we strolled through UC's campus. The meal was pancakes and fruit jam. Then they added an unknown topping and said, "Now it's Lebanese."

Above all, they reaffirmed my belief that humans everywhere are equals simply divided by languages and national borders. And they proved that it's possible to survive in the United States if you're a Russian female visiting where American fast-food chains proliferate, are accompanied by four friends and have three American men willing to disregard rent when faced with a scary landlord. God bless Siberia.

My roommate and I drove the women in our cars to the Dayton Airport the night they left in early August. We thanked them for an interesting time and warned that not everyone in the United States is safe to live with. Then they were off to San Francisco.

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Kickers Are People, Too

Time for the Bengals to draft one

By B. CLIFTON BURKE
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

With all the attention surrounding tall receivers and big guys named Tank and Bobbie, the small problem of the kicking situation remains in question.

Shayne Graham is an unprotected free agent this year, and there has been no word about the Bengals showing any interest in resigning him. Cincinnati did bring back Dave Raynor – the kicker the Bengals signed after Graham injured himself in the pre-season – but can we trust Raynor more than Graham to make kicks in the playoffs?

The Bengals could look to draft a kicker to develop; they selected Cincinnati native Kevin Huber in the fifth round last draft and turned him into an immediate upgrade at the punter position. Special-teams Coach Darren Simmons has attended various college pro days around the country, but that is a pretty standard off-season occurrence and probably shouldn't be analyzed too deeply.

Still, there are a few good prospects in this draft.

One is Kentucky native Aaron Pettry, an Ohio State alumnus, who is ranked atop many draft charts for kickers this year. Pettry showed a strong leg by making field goals from 50 and 52 yards last season, but his accuracy might be a concern as he missed four times with 40 yards. Texas kicker Hunter Lawrence only missed three times in 27 attempts but didn't convert anything over 50 yards.

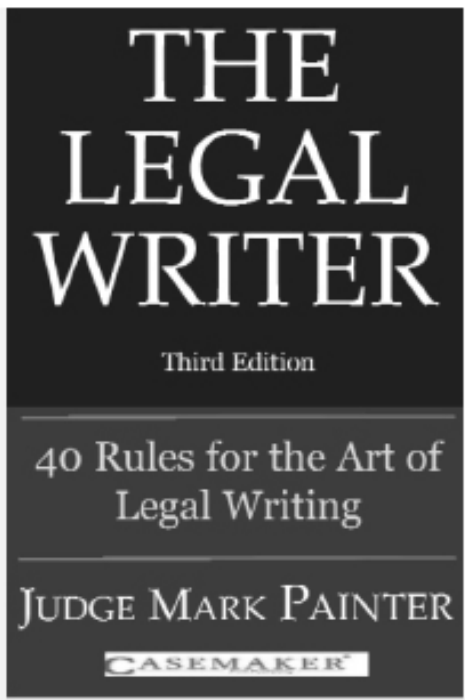
There is always an emergency kicker in the free agent market – Billy Cundiff comes to mind – and the Bengals will have to address a long-term answer for that dainty yet crucial spot on the team someday anyway. To take a decent kicker in the middle rounds of the upcoming draft (April 22-24) makes a lot of sense and would be a welcome pick to most fans.

But if the team finds itself at its next training camp with Raynor as the only kicker in sight, I think Chad Ochocinco should get a legitimate shot to compete for the starting kicker.

We all saw that point-after split the up-rights with grace, altitude and distance. Then we watched his ensuing kickoff driven deep to the 10-yard line. The man has a motor mouth, but he also apparently has a kicker's leg, and it seems worth testing its range. Why not? It would save a roster spot and generate more interest in the team.

Eighty-Five is a freak athlete who could probably play professional soccer and who once outraced a horse on television. He has the sleek elegance of a jungle cat on routes and can become boneless around the sidelines to get his feet in. He is a terrific football player, and that could very well include kicking.

It is unlikely that Chad ends up the kicker next year, same as Graham. That still just leaves Raynor, and I don't think that's good enough. The Bengals should either draft a kicker this year or allow Ocho to expand his carnival to special teams. To leave it unaddressed would be foolish; kickers might be small, but they matter too, damn it – they matter, too.



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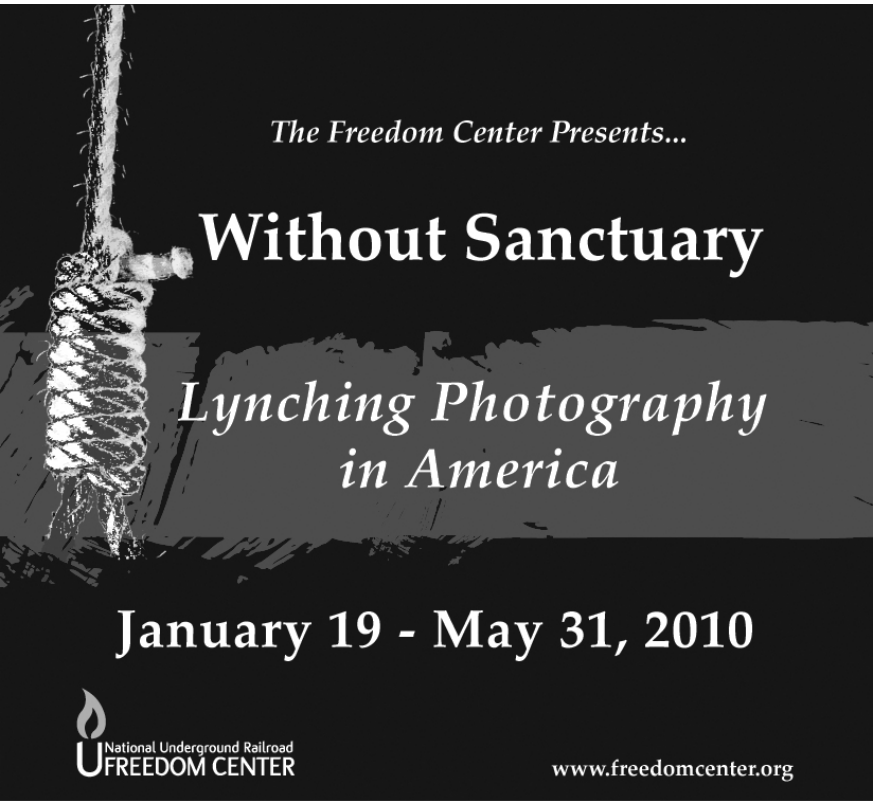
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Take Power From Corporations

There are more of us than them

BY GEORGE HERRELL
STREETVIBES VENDOR

When it comes to deciding the future of any populated neighborhoods, one would think that the residents would have a say. However, unfortunately for some citizens in one of the oldest neighborhoods in the city of Cincinnati, this is not the case.

In fact, according to a 2008 study by Dan La Botz – “Who Rules Cincinnati?” – there are seven corporations that, by virtue of their enormous wealth and power, dominate not only the economic but also the social life on Cincinnati. They are Procter & Gamble, Kroger Co., Macy’s Federated Department Stores, Fifth Third Bancorp, Western & Southern Financial, American Financial Corp. and E.W. Scripps.

These corporations, combined with some other influential companies, guide all of the important civic, cultural and social organizations of the city.

To achieve their goals, large Cincinnati corporations have created a series of private organizations: the Cincinnati Business Committee, Downtown Cincinnati Inc. and Cincinnati Center City Development Corp. Together, these organizations have managed to seize democratic control from the city council, from city agencies and from the public.

They’ve managed this by a number of methods – by creating the “strong mayor” system, by abolishing the city planning department and by handing over public planning functions to private organizations, all but destroying public discussion, debate, and democratic control.

As any corporate executive will tell

you, corporations exist solely to produce profits for their stockholders. Corporate control of the city’s economic and political life for the profits and the accumulation of corporate wealth and property has made Cincinnati the third-poorest midsize city in the United States. Furthermore, it has also served to preserve and sometimes deepen patterns of racial segregation and discrimination.

Meanwhile, the corporate CEOs and leaders continue to rake in enormous salaries:

*A.G. Lafley of Procter & Gamble, \$26.6 million

*Terry Lundgren of Macy’s, \$16.3 million

*Ken Lowe of E.W. Scripps, \$9.8 million

*David Dillon of Kroger Co., \$7.5 million

*Carl Lindner III of American Financial Group, \$7.1 million

*S. Craig Lindner of American Financial Group, \$6.8 million

*Fernando Aguirre of Chiquita Brands, \$1.9 million

*Mike Contreras of E.W. Scripps, \$1.3 million

The sheer wealth of corporate directors and executives makes it possible for them to have a tremendous influence on the economic, social, and political life of Cincinnati and the region. The millions of dollars they earn in salaries – not to mention other sources of wealth – makes it possible for them to fund political parties, to donate to charities and to give to the arts. Through all of these activities they exert their influence on every aspect of life in our city. Yes, the power of corporations is enormous and yet the situation is not hopeless.

The hope for the future of Cincinnati lies not with those at the top who

now rule it, but with the majority of the city’s middle-class and working-class people who, in a democracy, have (if they organize) the numbers, the power and the votes to decide the city’s fate.

When Cincinnati citizens voted against David Pepper, the son of a Procter & Gamble CEO, and for Mark Mallory, many were voting against corporate control and for a larger voice for the people, though others (keeping it real) cast their vote against the long history of white domination over what is now a half-black city.

We need to unify our African-American organizations; our progressive churches, temples and mosques; our community-based organizations, our unions and our city’s immigrants.

We can accomplish this if we create opportunities for African-American,

white and immigrant community activists to meet to talk about organizing unified movement for social change. We need to unite around common struggles and common issues of concern, and we need to find opportunities to put forward candidates of the local social movements.

If we are to challenge corporate power, then we must create platforms that speak to working people and to poor people in our city.

There must be no more chances for corporate-backed organizations to attempt to herd human beings around the city like they hope to the tenants of the Metropole Apartments for no other purpose than to fuel their all-consuming corporate engines.

Stand up, stand out, stand strong!



One mile from corporate headquarters. Photo by Rob Goeller

Personifying Recovery

Remembering Linda Zachary

BY LARRY GROSS
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

After battling cancer and surrounded by family and friends, Linda Zachary passed away March 16.

Zachary wore many hats as an employee at the Recovery Center – a

openly about her own mental illness, schizophrenia.

“The more I learn about my illness, the more I let them (her family) know, because my illness runs in our family,” she said.

Regarding her involvement with the Recovery Center, she said, “It’s like

missed by many. Linda had amazing talent as an artist and dreamed of becoming an art therapist. In the near future, the Recovery Center will be setting up a fund to establish a scholarship fund in honor of Linda to help

a student wanting to become an art therapist.”

For more information on The Recovery Center, visit recoverycenterhc.org or call 513-241-1411.

“Linda has touched many of our lives and truly personified what Recovery was all about. She will be greatly missed my many. Linda had amazing talent as an artist and dreamed of becoming an art therapist.”

~ Linda Ostholthoff

non-profit, consumer-driven agency located in Walnut Hills. The agency offers peer support, self-help, and education and community involvement activities for those recovering from mental illness.

Zachary taught classes, answered the phone and even swept the floors if needed. She was featured in “All Right to be Different” (see issue of July 1-14, 2010), a story about the Recovery Center. In the story, Zachary talked

home. You don’t have to put on airs. There’s peace.”

Zachary made a mark at the center, according to Linda Ostholthoff, training coordinator.


“Linda has touched many of our lives and truly personified what Recovery was all about,” Ostholthoff says. “She will be greatly



Linda Zachary. Photo by Andrew Anderson.

Need Help or Want to Help?

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300 Lytle Street, Cinti, Ohio 45202			112 E. Liberty Street, Cinti, Ohio 45202		
Bethany House 557-2873			Madisonville Ed & Assistance Center 271-5501		
1841 Fairmount Ave, Cinti, Ohio 45214			4600 Erie Ave, Cinti, Ohio 45227		
Grace Place Catholic Worker House 681-2365			Serves area codes: 45226, 45227, 45208, 45209		
6037 Cary Ave, Cinti, Ohio 45224			St. Vincent de Paul 562-8841		
Salvation Army 762-5660			1125 Bank Street, Cinti, Ohio 45214		
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<u>Shelter: Men</u>			Charlie’s 3/4 House 784-1853		
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CMHA 721-4580			Contact Center 381-4242		
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Volunteers of America 381-1954			Homeless & Housing Coalition 859-727-0926		
Anna Louise Inn 421-5211			Parish Kitchen 859-581-7745		
			Pike St. Clinic 859-291-9321		
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Walnut Hills: 2631 Gilbert, Cinti, Ohio 45206			VA Homeless 859-572-6226		
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Dark Humor and Harmony

Kevin T. Kelly's spiritual trek

“Art is the tangible manifestation of an eternal spirit that flows through all things,” says Kevin T. Kelly. “When I get immersed in creating art, I lose track of time and space; I am only in the ‘now’ moment, communing with the sacred and spiritual, with a universal energy, a force bigger than me that manifests itself through me. I feel deeply satisfied and connected, as if touched by the hand of God.”

Kelly is an artist and educator who grew up in Ludlow, Ky. After high school he attended the Art Academy of Cincinnati and earned a bachelor of fine arts degree in sculpture. He moved to New York City for six years, working as a studio assistant to Pop artist Tom Wesselmann.

As a child Kelly drew non-stop, inspired and coached by his father, who nurtured his talent, teaching him perspective, creating images for him to copy.

Although his degree is in sculpture, Kelly shifted entirely to painting after college.

“My sculptures were more akin to assemblages, comparable to drawings in 3D,” he says. “I always liked the Pop genre and decided to explore it in painting to reflect my perceptions on personal experiences, the human condition, as well as on society in general.”



Kevin T. Kelly stands in front of his new landscape paintings. Photo by Bill Howes.

Artists as Activists

By SAAD GHOSN
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

the “Monster of Vienna,” a Nazi with no remorse for his atrocities – topics prominent in the news. While working at Wesselmann’s studio Kelly continued his own art. He created a series of black cutout still lifes that did not satisfy him; they prompted him, however, to move in a different direction – Pop art.

“Pop art allowed me, through visual metaphors, to establish allegories and narratives which looked at personal dilemmas and perceptions, and apply them to a general societal context,” he says, “It let me open a visual dialogue with the viewer while trying to get to universal truth.”

From the beginning, Kelly felt that art needed content and that it needed to convey a message. He is not an abstractionist, but rather a figurative painter whose work tells a story, is socially aware, and taps into the emotions of the time. As an undergraduate he created works on apartheid and Nazism, in particular

With humor, Kelly’s work examined various facets of the human drama. Family issues, relationships, communication and misperceptions all found their way into his paintings, often with a dose of cynicism and sarcasm.

Paradigm Lost is based on a car advertisement from the 1950s. A man is driving; his wife is blindfolded. The message of the ad is that the car runs so smoothly the wife is not even aware of the ride. Kelly re-contextualized the image to reflect upon the issue of the ever-changing roles of gender and identity in society.

In *Club Lust*, an apparently wealthy married couple is shown in the intimacy of their bedroom. While the wife is waiting, sitting on the bed, her husband is instead admiring and enamored with a golf driver. The bedroom window opens on a golf course and an image of the same hangs on the wall. Kelly used the painting as a metaphor for the hidden aspects of relationships, for what is expected, what actually happens or does not happen; he depicted in it the openly unspoken truth, reality versus perception, the dissonance of the moment encountered in personal exchanges. The painting also alluded to the role sports play in people’s lives, particularly at retirement – a curse and a blessing at the same time.

Many of Kelly’s topics come from his personal experiences and reflections. The more he delves into them, the more he connects with himself, his emotions, his beliefs and values. It is an uncovering process, like peeling off the skins of an onion, exposing layer after layer. Often and sometimes after the fact, he says, he realizes that his paintings subconsciously relate to his own history – his divorce, for instance – yet have a universality due to their basic human subject.

Kelly always tries to convey his thoughts and messages with subtlety and humor. He does not want his paintings to impose his views; he strives to understand and represent the other side, engaging viewers in the debate, expanding their awareness, indirectly leading them to the spirituality of life.

All along Kelly has been interested in his own spiritual quest. A year ago he became dissatisfied and wanted to part with the cynical dark humor of his work, striving instead for more beauty, joy, serenity. He began reevaluating his belief system, meditating daily, embracing Taoist philosophy and learning the disciplines of Qi Gong and Tai Chi. This led his work into a new direction. He is now focusing on painting calm and harmonious landscapes, conveying the awe and grandeur of nature, its perpetual change, its peace and spirituality. They are small, intimate, meditative paintings.

“I began looking at places I’ve passed hundreds of times, really noticing their beauty and abundance for the first time,” Kelly says. “Nature is in a continual state of becoming, and I equate it metaphorically in these new landscape paintings to one’s journey from ego to spirit.”

“It’s my attempt at conveying to the viewer a transpersonal experience which transcends the mundane veneer of just focusing on personal and societal ills. I want to offer in these works the gift of serenity, a haven of solace and tranquility for anyone willing to take the time to look.”

Kelly’s art always comes from his heart. Whether through Pop art or new landscape paintings, it affirms who he is, conveys his beliefs and worldly views, shares his spiritual journey. Using symbols and metaphors, it aims at a higher level of understanding and consciousness, at the fullness of life, at the universality of truth.



Club Lust, acrylic painting by Kevin T. Kelly. Photo by Kevin T. Kelly.